

Testimony of

Olivia DeLoach

Aspiring Educator, Mitchell College

Before the Education Committee

HB 6884 An Act Concerning the Recruitment, Retention and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession

March 15, 2023

Raising the starting salary for educators entering the profession would not only encourage those who are unsure of entering the field to do so but would retain and keep those who are truly passionate about being educators. While many aspiring educators, like myself, are fueled by their passion, it is hard to look past such a big factor in your career choice. With starting salaries being inadequate, it brings up the hard question of “How am I going to afford the things I need?”

Within the state of Connecticut, the certification requirements can be a hefty financial burden while you are studying, due to the costs of certification tests such as the Praxis exams and Foundations of Reading exam. Then, adding to these financial burdens while in school, aspiring educators are forced to look to the future to plan for things such as affording rent, starting to pay back loans, having funds for furthering education, obtaining professional dress and reliable transportation, and all of the other basic necessities to live.

While currently student teaching, I have had to quit my on-campus job due to my full 7- to 8-hour day in the school, five days a week. During this time, I have had to continuously stress about paying for my day-to-day expenses and certification costs prior to graduation, which are added on top of the already hefty weight of college tuition. In the midst of stressing about my current situation, I have found myself already thinking about after graduation and if I will even be able to support myself financially. This, I believe can be said for many future educators who are soon to enter the profession.

As someone who came to the state of Connecticut to get a better education and receive more benefits going into the profession, it is disheartening to see aspiring educators who have worked so hard and jumped through all the hoops to attain initial certification come to the realization they likely will not be able to support themselves financially upon graduation. With the current starting salaries, we will probably need to secure a second job, find multiple roommates to afford rent, and spend years paying off student loans to not even put a dent in them. I personally have had to think long and hard about my next steps after graduating, and that has a lot to do with the financial burdens that are in my near future.

I urge you to please consider the value quality educators bring into school systems and how their salaries should be a reflection of their positive impact. Please raise the starting salaries of teachers in Connecticut.